

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

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CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lt. Governor

BETHANY A. CARD
Secretary

JOHN LEBEAUX
Commissioner

September 12, 2022

Re: Animal / Barn Inspection Books 2022 Inspections

[Please read these instructions!](#)

**THIS BOOK MUST BE COMPLETED AND MAILED BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT BY
JANUARY 1, 2023.**

Greetings:

Enclosed is the barn inspection book(s) to be used for your 2022 inspections. The annual barn inspections are overseen by MDAR and performed by the Municipal Animal Inspector. For those of you who have been the Inspector of Animals in your city or town for quite some time, you know that the Division of Animal Health has been doing its best to collect information on the numbers of domestic animals and their locations around the state. If you are new to the job, I can't stress enough how essential the collection of these data becomes to developing a response plan to an emergency and implementing it. The information contained in these books has been used by our Department and cooperating agencies on several occasions while assisting people who found themselves unable to get their animals clear of potentially dangerous situations. Our ability to efficiently allocate resources to the most vulnerable areas during a time of need relies on the accuracy of the information you provide. The more accurate and complete the information you give us, the more prepared we will be to respond when necessary.

You are being asked to inspect every premises where any number of livestock or poultry, including horses, are being housed. We do not include household pets, like dogs and cats, but potbellied pigs should be included as they can harbor the same illnesses as swine raised for food. We would not need to count rabbits if someone is maintaining one or two as pets, but if they are breeding rabbits for sale or meat please include them on inspection.

For each property you inspect, we will need **the specific street name and number where the premises is located**. Please fill out all the information at the top of the page for each location, including the zip code. Many towns have more than one zip code, and for us to get the most out of the data you collect, it is important that we have complete and correct address information for every property you inspect. This information is critical to pinpointing locations of animals on computer-generated maps of towns and counties to assist in planning any disease control or natural disaster response. **Please indicate the specific date the inspection was conducted**, so we will know exactly when the animals and their conditions were last observed. We are also asking for the phone number of the animal owner. Though it may not be readily available, we're asking you to do your best to complete all of the information requested. And as always, we ask that you **print as neatly as possible**. There are three copies for each premise, white, pink and yellow. The pink copy is given to the owner. The yellow copy should be retained with your records. **The white copy should be left in the book.** We ask that you complete all of your inspections and return **the entire bound book (with state copies intact)** to the Department **by January 1, 2023.**

If you see something during your inspections that doesn't look right to you, you should contact MDAR immediately so we can start working to solve the problem right away. Any premises that appears to have a disease problem must be your last stop of the day – we do not want to compound problems by bringing them from one farm to the next. If you have animals of your own at home, make sure to clean and disinfect yourself before having any contact with them. In order to decrease the possibility of spreading a disease, we want you to take reasonable bio-security measures by either wearing disposable shoe covers or cleaning and disinfecting footwear between farms. Also, make your inspections from a reasonable distance from the animals. Be sure you're close enough to see any signs of illness in the animals, but far enough to prevent any unnecessary contact. Please also

take appropriate biosecurity measures for human disease concerns during your inspections. Follow local, state, and federal recommendations for health and safety measures including wearing face coverings regardless of vaccination status.

We want you to get permission from the owner before conducting the inspection but try to avoid too much advanced notification. **If the owner would like you to inspect without themselves being present, then get their authorization in writing.** We want to be sure we're seeing the animals as they are normally maintained. These inspections are designed to ensure the safety of everyone's animals. Feel free to remind owners that the information written in the book is strictly confidential and will only be used to further develop our emergency response plans. **Owners that are unwilling to consent to an inspection should be reported to MDAR.**

We'd like for you to share some information with any poultry owners in town. The Department currently has a program that provides free Salmonella Pullorum and Avian Influenza testing for all chickens, turkeys and game birds in the state. This testing is required on any flock whose owner sells, gives away, or otherwise moves any live poultry or hatching eggs within the Commonwealth. Any poultry owners who are interested in scheduling testing should contact the Division of Animal Health at (617) 626-1795.

While performing the annual Barn Inspections we are not asking to check ID tags or note tag numbers, but we ask to verify the animals do have ear tags. Cattle, swine, sheep, and goats should be individually identified with ear tags if they are 18 months of age or older. We wouldn't be looking for proof of age beyond asking the owner how long they've had them. If it's over a year, they'll likely be old enough to require tags. If they don't have tags, please question the owner as to why this is not the case and let them know the animals are supposed to have tags. The owner should call Carry Shulock-Sexton at (617) 626-1797 for tag information and the animal inspector should report this to MDAR.

We are also requesting your help in improving compliance with the state requirements for the licensing of horse-riding stables and riding instructors. **MGL Chapter 128, section 2B states: "Every person engaged in the business of operating a riding school or a stable where horses are kept for hire, shall obtain a license..."** Additionally, any person providing any type of instruction to the general public aboard or attached to any equine must have a Massachusetts Riding Instructors License. We would greatly appreciate your help in educating horse owners about these requirements. Please contact the Department by calling Michael Gold at (617) 626-1712 or e-mail Michael.Gold@state.ma.us for further information or with any questions regarding riding stable or riding instructor licensing.

These inspections are **confidential (just like the rabies quarantine orders) the data collected is not shared** and you cannot provide your inspection slips to anyone, including other Town officials, for any reason. For the same reason, you may not conduct these inspections with other town officials, including the animal control officer. If someone is approaching you and asking for this information, they should be referred directly to MDAR. We ask that you not confuse the property owners by discussing municipal permitting issues, other town concerns, etc. while conducting these inspections. **You are representing MDAR on these inspections, not the municipality. Contact MDAR immediately with any questions or concerns.** The annual inspections are **for emergency preparedness purposes such as disease outbreaks or evacuations.** Our protection of this data is why we have such a high rate of voluntary access to these properties.

I fully understand the difficulties that can arise when doing these inspections. I know that scheduling conflicts can cause an individual inspection to drag on for weeks. However, I want you to understand how important this information is to us. The data contained in these books allows us to quickly make risk assessments for neighborhoods, towns or counties should we find ourselves facing a natural or man-made disaster. Having an understanding of where help would need to be concentrated gives us the ability to use our resources more efficiently. I greatly appreciate all the hard work you do for us.



Michael Cahill, Director
Division of Animal Health
Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources

MDAR BARN INSPECTION CONTACTS

Please contact MDAR immediately with questions/concerns.

Failed inspections will require follow up.

Inspections are at the direction of MDAR, not the municipality.

Barn Inspections Questions or Concerns

Rabies Program Coordinator

Ashley Kraft

Call 617-626-1810

Email Ashley.Kraft@mass.gov

Animal ID/Tags and Import/Export

Disease Traceability Coordinator

Carry Shulock- Sexton

Call 617-626-1797

Email Carry.Shulock-Sexton@mass.gov

Poultry Questions

Poultry Program Coordinator

Megan Megrath

Call 617-626-1798

Email Megan.Megrath@mass.gov

Horse Stable Questions

Michael Gold

Call 857-348-3940

Email Michael.Gold@mass.gov